

## REMARKS

This amendment is responsive to the Official Action dated August 25, 2006.

Claims 1-55 were pending in this application.

By way of this amendment, the Applicant has amended claims 19 and 20 and deleted claim 55. All amendments were made relative to the original specification.

Accordingly, claims 1-54 are currently pending.

### Restriction Requirement:

The Examiner required restriction of the invention to one of the following;

1. Claims 1-54 drawn to a system for attaching modular attachments to a firearm, including hand guards surrounding the barrel; and
2. Claim 55 drawn to a receiver sleeve.

The inventions were deemed distinct as combination and sub-combination.

Applicant hereby elects, without traverse, to prosecute the Group 1, namely claims 1-54.

Claim 55 has been deleted subject to the filing of a divisional reissue application.

### Supplemental Declaration:

A second supplemental declaration is enclosed for entry into the file. This second supplemental declaration acknowledges the current amendments to claims 19 and 20, and deletion of claim 55.

### Interview Summary:

Applicant thanks the Examiner for his time in discussing this case with Applicant's counsel.

A telephone interview was conducted on August 16, 2006, between Examiner Eldred and Applicant's counsel, Stephen Holmes. During the interview claims 1-55 were discussed relative to USP 6295754, USP 4667277 and USP 5343650. Agreement was reached wherein Applicant agreed to add language to claim 19 that will require the handguard piece to depend directly from the underside of the receiver sleeve, and that the handguard has a continuous side wall that surrounds the firearm along the length of the handguard. Agreement was also reached as to rewriting

dependent claim 20 in independent form as claim 20 did not require the amendments of claim 19 for allowability.

Examiner Eldred also identified claim 55 as comprising subject matter not found in the original claims of the patent, and therefore that it would need to be divided out into a separate divisional reissue application. Agreement was reached for the Examiner to issue a formal restriction and that Applicant would cancel claim 55 subject to the filing of a divisional reissue.

Full agreement was reached that these amendments would place the applicant in condition for allowance.

Accordingly, the present application is now believed to be in condition for allowance and ready for issue.

Corresponding action is respectfully solicited.

PTO is authorized to charge any additional fees incurred as a result of the filing hereof or credit any overpayment to our account #02-0900.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned should any questions arise.

Respectfully submitted,

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**STATEMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.173(c)****Status of Claims and Support of Claims**

The statements made below are for informational purposes only and are provided only to support newly entered claims 19-54 as required in the noted rules. These statements and references are provided as non-limiting examples of intended structure and are not intended to limit the claimed subject matter in any way.

1. original - no change
2. original - no change
3. original - no change
4. original - no change
5. currently amended -- Claim 5 previously depended on claim 4. The dependency of claim 5 has been changed to now depend on claim 1. No further support is believed to be necessary.
6. currently amended -- Claim 6 previously depended on claim 5. The dependency of claim 6 has been changed to now depend on claim 3. No further support is believed to be necessary.
7. currently amended -- Claim 7 previously depended on claim 6. The dependency of claim 7 has been changed to now depend on claim 1. No further support is believed to be necessary.
8. currently amended -- Claim 8 previously depended on claim 7. The dependency of claim 8 has been changed to now depend on claim 1. No further support is believed to be necessary.

9. original - no change

10. original - no change

11. currently amended -- Claim 11 previously depended on claim 10. The dependency of claim 11 has been changed to now depend on claim 1. No further support is believed to be necessary.

12. original - no change

13. original - no change

14. original - no change

15. original - no change

16. currently amended - Claim 16 previously depended on claim 15. The dependency of claim 16 has been changed to now depend on claim 12. No further support is believed to be necessary.

17. currently amended - Claim 17 previously depended on claim 16. The dependency of claim 17 has been changed to now depend on claim 12. No further support is believed to be necessary.

18. original - no change

19. (newly added) A system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm 10, said firearm having a receiver 12, said receiver having a forward portion and a top 13, and a barrel 16 joined to the forward portion of the receiver (See also Figs. 1 and 4), said system comprising:

a receiver sleeve 2 having a top side, an underside 40, a forward portion 3 and a rear portion 4, wherein the underside 40 of the rear portion 4 of the receiver sleeve is configured to be fixedly attached to the top of said firearm receiver (Fig. 4) (column 5,

lines 57 - 60) and said forward portion 3 of said receiver sleeve 2 is configured to extend above at least a portion of the firearm barrel (column 4, lines 65-66, and column 5, lines 50-52); and

a handguard piece 50/70 depending directly from the underside of the forward portion 3 of the receiver sleeve 2, said handguard piece having a continuous side wall 55/75 that surrounds the firearm barrel 16 along that portion of the firearm barrel along which said handguard piece extends without touching said firearm barrel when said receiver sleeve 2 is attached to said firearm receiver 12 .

20. (newly added) A system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm 10, said firearm having a receiver 12, said receiver having a forward portion and a top 13, and a barrel 16 joined to the forward portion of the receiver (See also Figs. 1 and 4), said system comprising:

a receiver sleeve 2 having a top side, an underside 40, a forward portion 3 and a rear portion 4, wherein the underside 40 of the rear portion 4 of the receiver sleeve is configured to be fixedly attached to the top of said firearm receiver (Fig. 4) (column 5, lines 57 - 60) and said forward portion 3 of said receiver sleeve 2 is configured to extend above at least a portion of the firearm barrel (column 4, lines 65-66, and column 5, lines 50-52); and

a handguard piece 50/70 depending from the underside of the forward portion 3 of the receiver sleeve 2, said handguard piece having a side wall 55/75 that surrounds the firearm barrel 16 without touching said firearm barrel when said receiver sleeve 2 is attached to said firearm receiver 12,

wherein at least a portion of the handguard piece 50/70 and the forward portion 3 of the receiver sleeve 2 are integrated into one piece.

21. (newly added) The system of claim 19, wherein said top side 20 of said receiver sleeve 2 includes a dovetail interface element 22,23 extending longitudinally along at least a portion of the top of the receiver sleeve, said dovetail interface element 22,23 being configured and arranged for the mounting of ancillary equipment (col. 4, line 57 through col. 5, line 22).

22. (newly added) The system of claim 19, further comprising:

at least one external dovetail interface element 90 arranged on the sidewall 55/75 of said handguard piece 50/70, said external dovetail element being configured and arranged for the mounting of ancillary equipment.

23. (newly added) The system of claim 22 wherein said at least one external dovetail interface element 90 is removably secured to said sidewall of said handguard piece (col. 7, lines 45-67).

24. (newly added) The system of claim 22, wherein said at least one external dovetail interface element comprises:

three external dovetail interface elements arranged on the sidewall of said handguard piece at 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 positions (See Figs. 4, 5, 6C, 9 and 10).

25. (newly added) The system of claim 24 wherein said external dovetail interface elements 90 are removably secured to said sidewall of said handguard piece (Figs. 9-10) (col. 7, lines 45-67).

26. (newly added) The system of claim 21, wherein said top side 20 of said receiver sleeve 2 further includes a plurality of apertures, each aperture adapted to threadedly receive a screw 96 (See Fig. 8).

27. (newly added) A system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm 10, said firearm having a receiver 12, said receiver having a forward portion and a top 13, and a barrel 16 joined to the forward portion of the receiver 12 (Fig. 1 and 4), said sleeve system comprising:

a receiver sleeve 2 having a top side 20, an underside 40, a forward portion 3 and a rear portion 4, wherein the underside 40 of the rear portion 4 of the receiver sleeve includes a receiver dovetail interface element 42,43 for securing the receiver sleeve rear portion to the receiver top, said forward portion 3 of said receiver sleeve

extending above at least a portion of the firearm barrel (See Fig. 4) (col. 4, lines 60-66 and col. 5, lines 50-60);

a primary dovetail interface element 22,23 extending longitudinally along at least a portion of the top 20 of the receiver sleeve 2, said primary dovetail element 22,23 being configured and arranged for the mounting of ancillary equipment;

a handguard piece 50 depending from the underside of the forward portion 3 of the receiver sleeve 2, said handguard piece 50 having a side wall 55 that surrounds the firearm barrel 16 without touching said barrel when said receiver sleeve is attached to said firearm receiver (Col. 4, lines 65-66 and Col 5, lines 50-54); and

at least one secondary dovetail interface element 90 arranged on the sidewall 55 of said handguard piece 50, said secondary dovetail element 90 being configured and arranged for the mounting of ancillary equipment (Col. 7, lines 45-67).

28. (newly added) The system of claim 27 wherein said at least one secondary dovetail interface element 90 is removably secured to said sidewall of said handguard piece (Figs. 9-10) (Col. 7, lines 45-67).

29. (newly added) The system of claim 27, wherein said at least one secondary dovetail interface element 90 comprises:

three secondary dovetail interface elements arranged on the sidewall of said handguard piece at 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 positions (See Figs. 4, 5, 6C, 9 and 10).

30. (newly added) The system of claim 29 wherein said secondary dovetail interface elements are removably secured to said sidewall of said handguard piece (Figs. 9-10) (Col. 7, lines 45-67).

31. (newly added) The system of claim 27, wherein said top side of said receiver sleeve further includes a plurality of apertures, each aperture adapted to threadedly receive a screw 96 (Fig. 8).

32. (newly added) A system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm 10, said firearm having a receiver 12, said receiver having a forward portion and a top 13,

and a barrel 16 joined to the forward portion of the receiver 12 (Fig. 1 and 4), said system comprising:

a receiver sleeve 2 having a top side 20, an underside 40, a forward portion 3 and a rear portion 4, wherein the underside 40 of the rear portion 4 of the receiver sleeve is configured to be fixedly attached to the top 13 of said firearm receiver 12 and said forward portion 3 of said receiver sleeve 2 is configured to extend above at least a portion of the firearm barrel 16 (Fig. 4)(Col. 4, lines 60-63 and Col. 5, lines 50-54);

an upper handguard piece 50 having opposing sidewalls 55 depending from the underside of the forward portion 3 of the receiver sleeve 2, said opposing sidewalls defining an open bottom and a hollow interior 58 (Figs 6A-C); and

a bottom handguard piece 70 having opposing sidewalls 75 extending upwardly, said sidewalls defining an open top and a hollow interior 78 (Fig. 6B),

wherein said bottom handguard piece 70 is configured to be removably attached to the upper handguard piece 50 such that said upper handguard piece and said attached bottom handguard piece surround the firearm barrel 16 without touching said barrel (Figs. 6A-C) (Col. 4, lines 65-66 and Col. 5, lines 50-54).

33. (newly added) The system of claim 32, wherein each of said opposing sidewalls 55 of said upper handguard 50 includes a terminal edge with engagement formations 66 (Fig. 5), and each of said opposing sidewalls 75 of said bottom handguard 70 includes a terminal edge 85 with complimentary engagement formations 82,86 that matingly engage said engagement formations formed on said upper handguard (Col. 6, lines 56-63).

34. (newly added) The system of claim 33, wherein said one of said engagement formations and said complimentary engagement formations comprises a longitudinal channel 61 and the other comprises a longitudinal protrusion 82/86 wherein the bottom handguard piece 70 is adapted to being joined to the upper handguard 50 piece by sliding engagement of the longitudinal protrusion and the longitudinal channel (Fig. 5).

35. (newly added) The system of claim 34 wherein said longitudinal channel 61 and said longitudinal protrusion 82 have interrupted wall segments 66,86 (Fig. 5).



36. (newly added) The system of claim 34, wherein the upper handguard 50 includes said longitudinal channel 61 and said bottom handguard 70 includes said longitudinal protrusion 82 (Fig. 5).

37. (newly added) The system of claim 36 wherein said longitudinal channel 61 and said longitudinal protrusion 82 have interrupted wall segments 66,86 (Fig. 5).

38. (newly added) A system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm 10, said firearm including a receiver 12 having a forward portion and a top 13, and further including a barrel 16 joined to the forward portion of the receiver (Figs. 1 and 4), said system comprising:

a receiver sleeve 2 having a top 20, an underside 40, a forward portion 3 and a rear portion 4 wherein the underside 40 of the rear portion 4 of the receiver sleeve is configured and arranged to be fixedly received over the top 13 of said receiver 12, and said forward portion 3 of said receiver sleeve is configured to extend in spaced relation above at least a portion of the barrel 16 of the firearm (See Fig. 4) (Col. 4, lines 60-66) and (Col. 5, lines 50-60);

a dovetail interface 22,23 extending longitudinally along at least a portion of the top 20 of the receiver sleeve 2; and

a handguard piece 50 fixedly attached to the forward portion 3 of the receiver sleeve 2 such that the handguard piece 50 is not movable relative to the receiver sleeve and having walls that depend downwardly and outwardly from opposing sides of the forward portion of said receiver sleeve such that said walls at least partially surround the barrel without touching the barrel 16 (Col. 6, lines 1-6).

39. (newly added) The system of claim 38, further comprising:

at least one external dovetail interface 90 extending longitudinally along an outside surface of said wall 55 of said handguard 50 (Fig. 6C) (Col. 7, lines 45-67).

40. (newly added) A system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm 10, said firearm including a receiver 12 having a forward portion and a top 13, and further including a barrel 16 joined to the forward portion of the receiver (See Figs. 1 and 4), said system comprising:

a receiver sleeve 2 having a top 20, an underside 40, a forward portion 3 and a rear portion 4 wherein the underside 40 of the rear portion 4 of the receiver sleeve is configured and arranged to be fixedly received over the top 13 of said receiver 12, and said forward portion 3 of said receiver sleeve is configured to extend in spaced relation above at least a portion of the barrel 16 of the firearm (See Fig.4) (Col. 4, lines 60-66) and (Col. 5, lines 50-60);

a dovetail interface 22,23 extending longitudinally along at least a portion of the top 20 of the receiver sleeve 2;

a substantially tubular handguard (Figs. 6A-6C) having an upper portion 50 that is fixedly attached to the forward portion 3 of the receiver sleeve 2 such that the handguard 50 is not movable relative to the receiver sleeve 2, said handguard further having a lower portion 70 that depends downwardly from said upper portion 50 such that said upper and lower portions 50,70 cooperate to define a hollow interior cavity 58,78 that at least partially surrounds the barrel 16 without touching the barrel; and

at least one external dovetail interface 90 extending longitudinally along an outside surface of said handguard (Fig. 6C).

41. (newly added) A system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm 10, said firearm including a receiver 12 having a forward portion and a top 13, and further including a barrel 16 joined to the forward portion of the receiver (Figs. 1 and 4), said system comprising:

a receiver sleeve 2 having a top 20, an underside 40, a forward portion 3 and a rear portion 4 wherein the underside 40 of the rear portion 4 of the receiver sleeve is configured and arranged to be fixedly received over the top 13 of said receiver 12, and said forward portion 3 of said receiver sleeve is configured to extend in spaced relation above at least a portion of the barrel 16 of the firearm (See Fig.4) (Col. 4, lines 60-66) and (Col. 5, lines 50-60);

a dovetail interface 22,23 extending longitudinally along at least a portion of the top 20 of the receiver sleeve;

an upper handguard piece 50 attached to the forward portion 3 of the receiver sleeve 2 (Fig. 5), said upper handguard piece 50 having opposing side walls 55 that depend downwardly and outwardly from opposing sides of the forward portion 3 of said

receiver sleeve 2 such that said side walls at least partially encircle the barrel 16 without touching the barrel (Figs. 6A-C);

said side walls each having a terminal edge with engagement formations 61,66 for receiving an accessory 70 having complimentary mating engagement formations 82.

42. (newly added) The system of claim 41, further comprising:

an accessory 70 having opposing side walls 75 that extend upwardly and outwardly from opposing side edges thereof, said side walls having a terminal edge with complimentary mating engagement formations 82 (Fig. 5).

43. (newly added) The system of claim 42, wherein said accessory comprises a lower handguard portion 70 and wherein said upper handguard portion 50 and said lower handguard portion 70 surround the barrel without touching the barrel when assembled (Figs. 6A-C).

44. (newly added) A system for attaching modular enhancements to a firearm 10, said firearm 10 having a receiver 12 and a barrel 16 joined to a forward portion of the receiver (Figs. 1 and 4), said system comprising:

an upper handguard piece 50 having a dovetail interface 22,23 extending longitudinally along at least a portion of the top 20 thereof, said upper handguard piece further having opposing sidewalls 55 depending downwardly from an underside 40 of said dovetail interface, said opposing sidewalls 55 defining an open bottom and a hollow interior 58 (Figs. 5, 6A-6C);

means for removably securing said upper handguard piece 50 to said receiver 12 (Figs. 4 and 5); and

a bottom accessory piece 70 having opposing sidewalls 75 extending upwardly, said sidewalls defining an open top and a hollow interior 78,

wherein said bottom accessory piece 70 is configured to be removably attached to the upper handguard piece 50 such that said upper handguard piece 50 and said attached bottom accessory piece surround the firearm barrel 16 without touching said barrel (Figs 6A-C) (col. 4, lines 60-66 and col. 5, lines 50-60).

45. (newly added) The system of claim 44, wherein each of said opposing sidewalls 55 of said upper handguard piece 50 includes a terminal edge with engagement formations 61,66, and each of said opposing sidewalls 75 of said bottom accessory piece 70 includes a terminal edge with complimentary engagement formations 82,86 that matingly engage said engagement formations formed on said upper handguard piece (Fig. 5).

46. (newly added) The system of claim 45, wherein said one of said engagement formations and said complimentary engagement formations comprises a longitudinal channel 61 and the other comprises a longitudinal protrusion 82, wherein the bottom accessory piece 70 is adapted to being joined to the upper handguard piece by sliding engagement of the longitudinal protrusion 82 and the longitudinal channel 61 (Col. 6, lines 56-63).

47. (newly added) The system of claim 46 wherein said longitudinal channel 61 and said longitudinal protrusion 82 have interrupted wall segments 66,86 (Fig. 5).

48. (newly added) The system of claim 46, wherein the upper handguard piece 50 includes said longitudinal channel 61 and said bottom accessory piece 70 includes said longitudinal protrusion 82 (Fig. 5).

49. (newly added) The system of claim 48 wherein said longitudinal channel 61 and said longitudinal protrusion 82 have interrupted wall segments 66,86 (Fig. 5).

50. (newly added) The system of claim 44 further comprising at least one secondary dovetail interface element 90 arranged on the sidewall 75 of said lower accessory piece 70, said secondary dovetail element being configured and arranged for the mounting of ancillary equipment (Fig. 4, 6C).

51. (newly added) The system of claim 50 wherein said at least one secondary dovetail interface element 90 is removably secured to said sidewall of said bottom accessory piece (Figs. 9-10) (Col. 7, lines 45-67).

52. (newly added) The system of claim 50, wherein said at least one secondary dovetail interface element 90 comprises three secondary dovetail interface elements arranged on the sidewall of said bottom accessory piece at 3:00, 6:00 and 9:00 positions (See Figs. 4, 5, 6C, 9 and 10).

53. (newly added) The system of claim 52 wherein said secondary dovetail interface elements 90 are removably secured to said sidewall of said bottom accessory piece Figs. 9-10) (Col. 7, lines 45-67).

54. (newly added) The system of claim 44 wherein said bottom accessory piece comprises a bottom handguard piece (Fig. 5).